



MONTANA STATE HOSPITAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

MANAGEMENT OF PATIENT'S PERSONAL EFFECTS

Effective Date: June 7, 2003

Policy #: AD-03

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- I. PURPOSE:** To provide instructions for management of personal items belonging to patients of Montana State Hospital.
- II. POLICY:** Patients at Montana State Hospital have a right to keep and use personal possessions that present minimal risk of harm to the patient or others. The Hospital reserves the right to place reasonable limits on the quantity of items patients may have on their treatment unit in order to ensure a safe, clean, and therapeutic environment for all persons. Personal items that are not permitted on treatment units will be placed in storage or sent to a friend or relative designated by the patient.

The Hospital is not responsible for lost, theft, or breakage of personal items that the patient maintains in their possession while hospitalized.

The Hospital will not store or return to the patient at the time of discharge illegal, illicit, or potentially dangerous articles of personal property such as, but not limited to, alcohol, unprescribed narcotics, drug paraphernalia, firearms, ammunition, knives, or other weapons. Such items may be destroyed or turned over to law enforcement personnel upon authorization of the Hospital Administrator. Food items not permitted on patient units may also be disposed of rather than placing it in storage. The patient's psychiatrist will determine whether to return pharmaceuticals to the patient at the time of discharge.

Every effort will be made to account for patient personal effects and return all items to the patient at the time of discharge. However, patients should be discouraged from bringing excess and valuable items to the Hospital or acquiring unnecessary items while hospitalized.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Personal effects – all items either brought to Montana State Hospital at the time of admission or accumulated during hospitalization that are identified on the Personal Effects Sheet.
- B. Contraband – any item that is illegal, construed as being a weapon, flammable, combustible, or otherwise potentially dangerous or inappropriate to the hospital setting. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Illicit drugs and alcohol;
2. Firearms;
3. Ammunition;
4. Knives with blades longer than four inches;
5. Lighter fluid; and
6. Fireworks/flares

C. Valuables – items identified by Montana State Hospital staff or the patient as having significant monetary or personal importance. Examples include but are not limited to:

1. Credit cards;
2. Jewelry;
3. Checkbooks; and
4. Identification/driver's license.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. Direct Care Staff:

1. Sort, identify and record on the Personal Effects Sheet personal items, valuables and contraband at the time of admission.
2. Add or delete items on the Personal Effects Sheet as appropriate during a person's hospitalization.
3. Complete Personal Effects Receipt, Sec. I.
4. Upon discharge or transfer to another treatment unit, review the Personal Effects Sheet to ensure all personal belongings accompany the patient.
5. After regular admission hours, ensure that valuables on newly admitted patients are secured with the admissions staff.

B. Ward Secretary:

1. Assists direct care staff in sorting, identifying and recording personal effects/valuables at the time of admission.
2. During regular admission hours, ensures that patients' valuables are secured in the admission area.
3. Coordinates storage of personal effects for patients during hospitalization.

C. Admissions Staff:

1. Receives, verifies, records and secures patient valuables in the admission area.
2. Releases patient valuables per approval from staff and/or per ward rules during hospitalization.
3. Upon release, returns patient's valuables and obtains patient's signature that all valuables have been returned.
4. Ensures that contraband items are secured and disposed of or released per this policy.

D. Nurse House Supervisor:

1. Receives patient valuables from direct care staff after regular admission hours and secures them in the designated admission area.

E. Hospital Administrator

1. Authorize the disposal or transfer to law enforcement authorities potentially dangerous items

V. PROCEDURE:

- A. All belongings accompanying the patient upon admission are identified and recorded on the Personal Effects Receipt Form at the time of admission by staff assigned to admit the patient. This form must be witnessed at the time of admission by the patient or the person accompanying the patient and by two hospital employees, all of whom must sign the form.
- B. During the course of hospitalization, any addition or deletion of personal effects that are listed on the Personal Effects Receipt must be immediately recorded on the proper form dated and witnessed by two hospital employees, both of whom must sign in the comment section of the form. This includes articles acquired while on home visit, through the mail, brought to the hospital by visitors, purchased by the patient and those items which are given to another person, worn out or destroyed.
- C. When transferring the patient to one unit from another within the hospital, all personal effects are to be checked by one hospital employee from the transferring unit and by one hospital employee from the receiving unit, both of whom must sign indicating the date and their respective unit on the back of the Personal Effects Receipt, Section 1.

- D. Upon release from the hospital, all personal effects are returned to the patient or his/her representative who must sign the Personal Effects Receipt, Section II. This must be dated, witnessed and signed by one staff member. If for some reason an item is not returned, that must be indicated on the form and an explanation provided. Items taken for the patient by another person must have a written authorization of the patient and be witnessed by a member of the treatment team.
- E. In the case of patient death, valuables and personal effects are given to the next of kin or sent to the representative of the funeral home. When there are no relatives or significant others known, effects will be accounted for in the same manner as occurs when a person is transferred from one unit to another in the hospital and stored in a central location established by the admission section.
- F. Contraband items such as those identified previously are to be taken from the patient at the time of admission and described as clearly as possible on Section III of the Personal Effects Receipt Form. The Hospital Administrator, Director of Nursing, or the Nursing Supervisor is to be called immediately and determine what action to take. Documentation will be maintained if an item is disposed of or turned over to a law enforcement agency.
- G. The patient's name, hospital number and date will be recorded on the Personal Effects Receipt, Sec. I. After the form is filled out, the patient will review, sign and date the form and two staff members will sign and date the form also.
 - 1. The Personal Effects Receipt, Sec. I will be made out in triplicate, listing personal items such as watches, rings, etc. (noting make of article and description) that patients will keep on their person.
 - 2. A copy of the Personal Effects Receipt, Sec. I will be given to the patient, one copy will be placed in the patient's ward file, and one copy will be sent to Medical Records upon discharge.
 - 3. Patients will assume full responsibility for the safety and welfare of the items listed on the form. Montana State Hospital will not replace or reimburse the patient for the loss or damage of any of the items listed. It is the patient's decision to keep the items on their person and by doing so they will assume full responsibility for them.

VI. REFERENCES:

- A. 53-21-142 M.C.A. – Rights of Persons Admitted to Facility.
- B. Admission Procedure, Nursing Procedure Manual

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 Billie Holmlund Date
 Director of Information Resources